

Comp II - Introduction

Chapter 1, 2, 3, and 4

Chapter 1

Everything Is an Argument

Examples of Arguments

- "Movie of the year!" blares the headline of an online ad for Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith.
- A professor interrupts a lecture to urge her students to spend less time on Instant Messaging and more in the company of think, old books.
- A senator tries to tell an irate C-SPAN caller that the Homeland Security Bill does not reduce citizens' constitutional rights or their privacy.
- A nurse assures a youngster eyeing an approaching needle, "This won't hurt one bit."
- A sports columnist blasts a football coach for passing on fourth down and two in a close game - even though the play produces a touchdown.

Definition

From the clothes you wear to the food you choose to eat to the groups you decide to join - all of these everyday activities make arguments about who you are and what you value.

An argument can be any text -
whether written, spoken or visual
- that expresses a point of view.

Argument vs. Persuasion

The point of argument is to discover some version of the truth, using evidence and reasons.

The aim of persuasion is to change a point of view or to move others from conviction to action.

Argument (discover a truth) -> conviction

Persuasion (know a truth) -> action

Eight Types of Arguments

Arguments to Inform

Many arguments, from street signs to notices of meetings to newspaper headlines, may not seem especially "argumentative" because their main purpose is to inform members of an audience about something they didn't know.

Arguments to Convince

If you were writing a report that attempted to identify the causes of changes in global temperatures, you would likely be trying not to conquer opponents but to satisfy readers that you had thoroughly examined those causes and that they merit serious attention.

Arguments to Explore

Many important subjects call for arguments that take the form of exploration, either on your own or with others.

Is there a status quo or a current trend that is puzzling?

Arguments to Make Decisions

Closely allied to argument that explores is that which aims at making good, sound decisions.

The result of many exploratory arguments may be to argue for a particular decision.

Examine the pros and cons of each possible decision.

Arguments of - Meditate or Pray

Sometimes arguments can take the form of intense meditations on a theme, or of prayer. In such cases, the writer or speaker is most often hoping to transform something in him or herself or to reach a state of equilibrium or peace of mind.

Arguments of Fact - Did something Happen?

An argument of fact usually involves a statement that can be proved or disproved with specific evidence or testimony. Although relatively simple to define, such arguments are often quite subtle, involving layers of complexity not apparent when the question is initially posed.

Arguments of Evaluation - What is the quality of the thing?

Arguments of definition lead naturally to arguments/questions of quality.

These are so common that writers sometimes take them for granted, ignoring their complexity and importance in establishing people's values and priorities.

Proposal Arguments - What actions should be taken?

In arguments that propose action, writers first have to succeed in presenting a problem in such a compelling way that readers ask: What can we do?

A proposal argument often begins with the presentation of research to document existing conditions.

Occasions for Argument

- Arguments about the Past -
 - Debates about what has happened in the past are called forensic arguments; such controversies are common in business, government and academia.
- Arguments about the Future
 - Debates about what will or should happen in the future are called deliberative arguments.
- Arguments about the Present
 - Arguments about the present are often arguments about contemporary values - the ethical premises and assumptions that are widely held(or contested) within a society.
 - Sometimes called epideictic or ceremonial

Readers and Writers Context

- Writers must carefully consider the reader and the context in which they will read the piece.
 - social
 - cultural
 - institutional
 - economic
 - linguistic
 - geographic

Appealing to Audiences

(Aristotle's Appeals - You learned these in 10th grade!)

Pathos

- emotional appeals or appeals to the heart

Ethos

- ethical appeals or appeals based on the writer's authority and credibility

Logos

- logical appeals or appeals to reason

These are the topics of the next three chapters!

Chapter 2

Arguments from the Heart - Pathos

Understanding How Emotional Arguments Work

- Words, images, and sounds can arouse emotions and often generate a physical reaction.
- Writers and speakers should find words and images to evoke emotions in people. They might move their audiences to sympathize with ideas they connect to those feelings, and even to act on them.
- Pathos arguments are most effective in persuading not arguing.

Using Emotions to Build Bridges

- You may sometimes want to use emotions to connect with readers, to assure them that you understand their experiences or, to use a famous political line, "Feel their pain."
- A more obvious way to build an emotional tie is simply to help readers identify with your experiences.

Using Emotions to Sustain an Argument

- You can use emotional appeals to make logical claims stronger or more memorable the same way photos and images add power to argument.
- This is tricky! Lay on too much emotion (rage, pity, or shame) and you may offend the very audience you hoped to convince.
- Writers can generate emotion by presenting logical arguments. Readers confronted with core issues or important choices are then asked to consider the consequences.

Using Humor

- Humor in an argument will help put readers at ease, thereby making them more open to a proposal you have to offer.
- Humor makes people suspend their judgment and even their prejudices.
- Humor helps a writer deal with especially sensitive issues.
- Humor can help a writer admit problems or mistakes they couldn't acknowledge in another way.
- Most powerful emotional argument is ridicule - humor aimed at a particular target. Ridicule discredits a writer completely!

Be careful!

- Don't play puppet-master with people's emotions!
- Take time early on to think about how you want readers to feel as they read and consider your persuasive claims.
- Writers and journalists routinely use what are called human interest stories to give presence to issues or arguments.
- You can do the same, using a particular incident to evoke sympathy, understanding, outrage or amusement.
- Always be HONEST.

Chapter 3

Arguments Based on Character - Ethos

Intro Notes

- Before we'll listen to others, we usually must respect their authority, admire their integrity and motives, or at least acknowledge what they stand for.
- "Others" can be a person, a group, an organization, an institution, a corporation, newspaper or college.
- Establishing a persuasive ethos is not simply a matter of seeming honest or liable but also of affirming an identity and sharing values with one's intended audiences.

Creating Ethos

- Writers and speakers create ethos the moment they make any argument through...
 - the language they use, the evidence they offer, the respect they show those whom disagree, and the way they tender themselves to an audience physically - through gestures, posture, eye contact, and tone of voice.
- Writers and speakers also bring their previous lives, work, and reputations to the table when they make an argument.
 - Are they well known, liked, respected contributes to persuasive power.
 - If character is problematic in any respect, they may have to use the speech to reshape an audiences' perception.

Understanding How Arguments Based on Character Work

- We can not possibly make all the decisions we are faced with! On many occasions we turn to professionals for wise, well-informed, and frank advice: a doctor, lawyer, teacher, pastor.
- We also look for guides in less momentous occasions: a coach, a friend, or waiter. (What is the best thing on the menu?)
- An expert can be anyone with knowledge and experience on the subject.
- Levels of character: the "car guy" from the neighborhood, *Consumer Reports*, or the SUV ad in *People*

Claiming Authority - Wondering about the Author

- What does he know about the subject?
- What experiences does she have that make her especially knowledgeable?
- Why should I pay attention to this writer?

When you make the argument, anticipate these questions from your audience and answer them before asked!
Write for readers who know and trust you.

Choose topics you know.

Establishing Credibility

The simplest way of establishing your credibility with an audience that doesn't know you is to make reasonable claims and then to back them up with evidence and documentation - or in an electronic environments, to link your claims to sites with reliable information.

Establish credibility by connecting your own beliefs and values to core principles that are well established and widely respected.

Use language that shows your respect for the readers, addressing them neither above or below their capabilities.

Establishing Credibility cont...

Cite trustworthy sources.

Present ideas clearly: graphs, tables, charts, or illustrations, visual attractiveness and correct spelling.

Sometimes to be credible, you have to admit limitations!

Acknowledge exceptions, qualifications, or weaknesses in your argument.

A more formal tone gives your claims greater authority.

Coming Clean about Motives

Question their motives!

- Whose interest are they serving?
- How will they profit from their proposal?

Discuss potential conflicts of interest to your potential advantages: class, gender, group affiliation.

Let your audience know where your loyalties lie.

don't be afraid to share your feelings.

Chapter 4

Arguments Based on Facts and Reason - Logos

Intro Notes

- Logos is typically used to persuade based on facts, evidence, and reason

Two kinds of proofs:

- *Hard evidence* - facts, clues, statistics, testimonies, witnesses
- *Reason and common sense*

photos v. missiles v. accumulation of facts and pattern

Providing Hard Evidence

- Facts
- Statistics
- Surveys and Polls
- Testimonies, Narratives, and Interviews

Audiences today have more faith in claims that can be counted, measured, photographed, or analyzed than in those that are merely defended with words.

Red-light cameras!

Simple claim = Statement + Proof *or*
= Claim + Supporting Evidence

Facts

We will listen to people we don't agree with if they overwhelm us with evidence.

Facts should come from Honest sources:

- "reported by the New York Times"
- "according to CNN"
- "in a book by Oxford University Press"

Challenge the biases of reputable sources. Point out factual mistakes of mainstream media.

Scrutinize any fact you collect before passing them on yourself!

Test their reliability and admit any problems from the start!

Statistics

"Figures lie and liars figure!"

Writers can always use words to share the interpretation of the numbers. (5% or 1 out of 20?)

Take responsibility and understand the role you play in giving numbers a voice and presence.

Surveys and Polls

One of the most influential forms of statistics!

Provide a persuasive appeal because majority opinions matter.

Ask:

- Who commissioned the poll?
- Who is publishing its outcome?
- Who was surveyed and in what proportions?
- What stakes do the parties have in the outcome?

Keep these Q's in mind when conducting your own poll/survey.

Testimonies, Narratives, and Interviews

Support argument with human experience.

Works well when seeking to make a case for action, change or sympathetic understanding.

Personal experience can support a claim convincingly, if the writer has earned the trust of readers.

Personal revelations made in interviews can also support argument. (60 Minutes)

- What role does the interviewer play?
- Observer or manipulator of information?

Using Reason and Common Sense

- most famous is Deductive Reasoning
- Enthymeme= ordinary sentence stating a claim + reason
 - Compressed argument based on what audiences know and will accept
- Cultural Assumptions and Values
 - Assumptions of an argument can be based on shared values derived from culture and history.
 - fairness and equity
 - tradition
 - privileged race, gender, religion or aristocratic birth
 - "We have always done it that way."

Providing Logical Structures for Argument

- Degree
 - More of a good thing or less of a bad thing therefore, more of a bad thing is bad
- Analogies
 - comparisons - similes, metaphors
 - not the best to use because of faulty analogies or fallacies of argument
- Precedent
 - related to analogy as a comparison
 - of people
 - of time
 - consistent with previous policies, actions or beliefs

The End